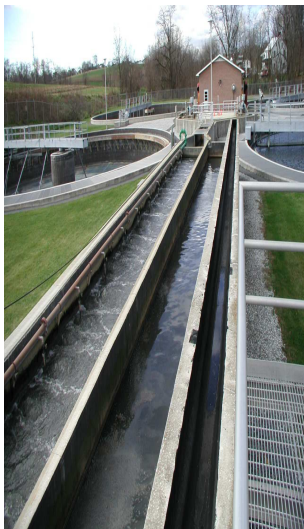




Wastewater System Operator Roles and Responsibilities: A Best Practices Guide



Introduction

<i>Purpose</i>	<p>The main goal as a system operator is to protect water quality and public health. This guide will help you better understand your roles and responsibilities in order to achieve this goal. There are key responsibilities that are critical to meeting your ultimate goal by complying with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements. This Guide will help you better understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your roles and responsibilities in collecting wastewater and providing treatment to a required level, as efficiently as possible. • Additional responsibilities may vary depending on your system characteristics (e.g., complexity of treatment) and managerial structure.
<i>Target Audience</i>	<p>This guide is intended for operators of all Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) or tribal systems discharging 5.0 MGD or less.</p>

System Operation & Maintenance

Keep all system components functioning efficiently and effectively.

General Responsibilities

- Monitor chemical feed and other system components.
- Monitor effectiveness of treatment.
- Prepare and maintain records of meter readings, tests, equipment, chemical use, correspondence and any odor problems.
- Develop a cleaning and inspection strategy.
- Conduct preventative and routine maintenance on facilities and equipment along with security inspections.
- Periodically assess efficiency of system.
- Update system maps when a significant change to any system component is made.
- Make all process control/system integrity decisions necessary to maintain the treatment plant system components.
- Attend training to understand and meet regulatory changes and new technologies.
- Follow manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance of all equipment in the plant and system. Including: pumps, aerators, meters, tanks, screening devices, valves, lift stations, mains and manholes among other components.
- Develop and maintain an Asset Management Plan.
- Benefit from the free TEAMS and CUPSS asset management software for small community systems (see links below for more information).

Regulatory Compliance

Comply with all relevant regulations to protect human health and the environment under the Clean Water Act.

General Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain a sampling plan, designed to protect the system, which covers all monitoring requirements.
- Collect or oversee collection of samples.
- Address any problems quickly and ensure that all required follow-up steps are taken (e.g., additional sampling, public notification, sanitary survey or other compliance inspection).
- File all required reports and maintain records.
- Resolve any compliance problems, in consultation with regulators.
- Increase awareness of tools, reference materials, and other state and federal resources.

Communication

Maintain a positive relationship with customers, regulators, and the system decision makers and keep them informed of your efforts to comply with NPDES requirements.

General Responsibilities

- Report analytical results to regulators as required.
- Maintain, respond to, resolve, and keep a record of permit violations, if any.
- Communicate with the owner, manager, or board about technical and financial needs of your system (this includes training and recertification). Records should also be kept of any communication with decision makers.
- Keep records of all DMR's, violations, exceedances and any communication with regulators.
- Inform the owner, manager, or board of any key findings from routine inspections and scheduled maintenance. Provide input for planning and preparing of equipment replacement.

System Security

Protect your system against natural disasters, vandalism and unplanned physical intrusion.

General Responsibilities

- Develop a plan to protect your facilities in case of an emergency, including updating your policies and procedures manual with security-related information.
- Inspect critical facilities and components and ensure authorized access whenever appropriate.
- Store chemicals in locked areas with proper safety equipment.
- Maintain a list of written contacts for use in an emergency and make sure you know whom to contact in the event of an emergency.
- Attend security-related training if it is available.
- Educate other staff on emergency procedures and keep contact information up to date.

For additional information:

Visit the EPA Wastewater in Small Communities website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/owm/mab/smcomm/index.htm> or contact your state regulatory agency.

Also visit these areas of the EPA Office of Wastewater Management website:

[Tools for Small Communities](#)

[Municipalities and wastewater treatment plants: Fact sheets and outreach materials](#)

[NPDES- Municipalities and wastewater treatment plants: Overview](#)

[Water quality and technology based permitting](#)

And the Rural Community Assistance Partnership:

<http://www.rcap.org/>